



BOROUGH OF BODMIN.

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*Annual Report*

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

Year ending 31st December, 1951

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BODMIN:

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PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF:

Medical Officer of Health:

J. REED, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., D.P.H.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector:

JOHN MILES, M.I.H.E., A.R.San.I.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1951.

The Council has made further progress in its major public health problems, housing and water supplies. The efforts in relation to the first are visible, both in the construction of new healthy premises and demolition of old insanitary ones, or even perhaps in the increased volume of repair on those which fall in between. They are healthy signs, and it is a great pity that national financial difficulties restrain such excellent progress. It is impossible to produce convincing figures from a small town of the effect of good housing on health, but ample evidence exists in towns with a large population. Good housing is but one facet of the improved standards of living which have contributed so much to the lower mortality and morbidity statistics during the present century. The standards accepted by the Council constituting 'unfitness' in housing are very low, and it must be remembered that items once considered amenities have now become necessities. Unfortunately this may also be the case for less valuable commodities such as tobacco, against which the essentials of rent, and food have to compete. Some of the most insanitary and dangerous properties have now been dealt with individually and it may now be possible to consider the more rational course of 'Clearance Areas.'

The progress in the second major problem is unfortunately not so visible, but steps are afoot to modify the present unsatisfactory situation. In the meantime the advice must remain that for drinking purposes water should first be boiled.

I should like to express my thanks to the Council and officials, in particular Mr. Miles, who has been responsible for certain sections of this report.

I beg to remain,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN REED.

# I. STATISTICS.

## General Statistics.

Area in acres	...	3,311
Number of Inhabited Houses		1,461
Estimated mid-year population		5,886
Rateable Value	...	£30,676
Product of penny rate	...	£119-8-1
Comparability Factor		
(a) births	...	1.56
(b) deaths	...	0.89

## Vital Statistics.

### Live Births.

TABLE I.

Number of Registered Live Births 1951.

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	43	38	81
Illegitimate	1	1	2
Total	44	39	83

Birth Rate per 1,000 population—14.1

Birth Rate per 1,000 population England and Wales—15.5

### Still Births.

One female legitimate child was still-born during the year.

### Infant Deaths.

Four infant deaths, 3 male and 1 female were recorded. All occurred within the first month of life, the causes being prematurity, birth injury and Rh. incompatibility.

## Deaths.

TABLE II.

Number of Registered Deaths in 1951.

	Male	Female	Total
	33	40	73

Crude Death Rate—12.4 per 1,000 population.

Death rate England and Wales—12.5 per 1,000 population.

TABLE III.

Distribution of Deaths by Diseases.

	Male	Female	Total
Heart Diseases	10	17	27
Diseases of Intracranial Vessels	2	5	7
Respiratory diseases excluding tuberculosis	3	5	8
Cancer	3	5	8
Respiratory tuberculosis	2	1	3
Prematurity	—	2	2
Accident	1	2	3
Other Causes	12	3	15
Total—	33	40	73

TABLE IV.

Distribution of Ages at Death.

Age	Male	Female	Total
0 — 1 month	3	1	4
1 month — 20 years	—	—	—
21 — 40 years	1	1	2
41 — 60 years	5	5	10
61 — 70 years	2	6	8
71 — 80 years	13	13	26
81 — 90 years	7	14	21
91+	2	—	2
Total—	33	40	73

## II. GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES

### County Council Services.

#### Maternal and Child Welfare.

**Ante-natal Care** was provided in part by the General Practitioners and two County Council Midwives, supplemented by the Specialist ante-natal service in Wadebridge. The clinic has functioned for a little over one year and has fully justified its establishment. It has not yet been possible to hold a midwives' ante-natal clinic for educational purposes.

**Midwifery.** Seventy nine confinements were notified of which fifty were conducted in the home, 27 in hospital and 2 in nursing homes. Maternity accommodation nearer to Bodmin became available for cases unsuitable for home confinement when the Trebarras Nursing Home was established at Liskeard.

**Infant Welfare Centres.** The Centre, held twice monthly in the Centenary Rooms, continued to be well attended. The average attendance during the year was 28 children per session. The services provided are essentially educational and advisory with facilities for vaccination and immunisation.

#### Health Visiting and Home Nursing Services.

These are combined with the duties of midwife, the district being served by two County Council Nurses. Neither are qualified Health Visitors, but are qualified to administer Gas and Air Analgesia in midwifery.

#### Ambulance Service.

The service provided by the County Council in conjunction with the St. John Ambulance Brigade



was adequate during the year. Some delay in night call out was experienced which was particularly irksome in view of the considerable distances to the nearest suitable hospital accommodation. Additional telephone extensions to drivers nearer the station reduced the delay to within reasonable limits.

## **Vaccination and Immunisation.**

**Vaccination** Twenty seven children under one year of age were vaccinated during the year, approximately one quarter of those eligible for vaccination. Each out-break of small-pox in this country is followed by disputing correspondence in medical journals about the advisability of routine vaccination. The main points of contention concern the advantages of protecting the community as a whole, against the dangers of modified small-pox in the few vaccinated, and the development of encephalitis subsequent to vaccination. The majority appear to be in favour of the procedure, but it should be emphasised that the greatest protection can only be secured by a high percentage of vaccinated persons and when the operation is repeated at recognised intervals. Vaccination of such a small proportion of children as indicated, would appear to carry with it a preponderance of disadvantages, and until a more enthusiastic approach is made to the problem the procedure seems unlikely to be of any real value to the community as a whole.

**Diphtheria Immunisation.** Sixty seven children were given primary courses of immunisation during the year, giving a total of 190 protected in the age group 0 — 4 years. The approximate percentage protected in this age group is 65 per cent., a proportion of the pre-school age group considered to be reasonable for the prevention of diphtheria. It



would be a great improvement if the figure were 100 per cent. Protection in this disease is generally accepted to require repeated injections, a procedure which is extended to the School Health Service when boosting doses are given at the required times. Fifty two children were so treated during the year. No cases of diphtheria, proved nor suspected, occurred in the civilian population.

**Home Help Service.** This is established by the County Council through the W.V.S. Six home-helps were employed during the year, assisting 33 cases.

**Neglected Children and Care of the Aged and Infirm.** During the year the County Council arranged for Committees to be formed in each Area, comprised of members of Voluntary and Statutory bodies interested in these problems. There are fortunately few of the first group in the Borough, and for the latter the Old Peoples' Association does excellent work. The problem which concerns this department in relation to the aged arises when local services no longer suffice and admission to hospital or institution becomes desirable. Accommodation at once is invariably lacking in hospital or County Council Institution.

No action was taken under Section 47, National Assistance Act, 1946.

## **School Health Service.**

**Premises.** The premises of both primary schools remain unchanged. An improvement in the quantity of water supply was obtained to the Church School.

**Pupils.** 294 children were examined on routine inspection, 2 only being considered as of poor nutritional condition. 47 were found to require treatment for defects, and 49 had defects requiring to be kept under observation. 212 inspections were carried out on children with defects previously observed.

**Special Education.** The Education Authority opened its Special School for Educationally Sub-Normal Pupils over 11 years of age. Several children considered suitable for admission were recommended but the response of parents was poor. Only one child from the Borough could be admitted to the school. The facilities provided are extremely good and far superior to conditions prevailing in the ordinary schools. It is to be hoped that the parental attitude to future admissions will be better.

### III. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

#### Water Supplies.

The source of the town's supply remained the same during 1951. Sampling continued regularly, the results following much the same pattern as in previous years. The results are tabulated below, and it will be seen that the worst samples occurred in the summer months. On the appearance of samples showing faecal pollution, a visit to the source confirmed the use of the Newton Stream intake, the supply open to the greatest amount of pollution. Deficiencies in the quantity of water were reported from the higher levels of the town.

TABLE V.  
WATER SAMPLES, 1951.

Date.	Number of Coliform Bacilli per 100 ml.	Number of Faecal Coli per 100 ml.
Jan. 17th, 1951	0	0
Feb. 1st, 1951	3	1
Mar. 7th, 1951	7	0
16th, 1951	0	0
21st, 1951	8	0
28th, 1951	0	0
Apr. 25th, 1951	0	0
May 24th, 1951	0	0
June 19th, 1951	8	3
July 16th, 1951	25	1
Aug. 20th, 1951	50	5
Sept. 8th, 1951	13	3
19th, 1951	160	11
29th, 1951	180+	180+
Oct. 10th, 1951	0	0
18th, 1951	50	0
Nov. 7th, 1951	0	0
20th, 1951	17	0
Dec. 31st, 1951	0	0

New water mains were laid to the Rock Lane Estate and another in Beacon Road to supply the higher levels of the Beacon Estate.

**Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.** New sewers of 9" and 6" diameter were constructed for the Rock Lane Estate and were connected with Scarletts Well disposal system. A little progress was made during the year in the examination of the sewerage system of the older parts of the town and in several sectors new man-holes were constructed where such facilities were lacking. No major improvements were carried out at either of the sewage works though modification or extentions at Scarletts Well may be desirable in the near future.

**Refuse Disposal.** Controlled tipping at Dragon Pits continued without giving rise to any nuisance. The tip has been well maintained and is of sufficient capacity to serve the needs of the town for many years. The standard of household refuse containers in general use leaves much to be desired and representation on this point again received little attention by the Council.

**Rodent Control.** The public demand for the services of the Council's operative increased considerably during the year. Much good work was accomplished in treating business premises in the older part of the town.

**Camping Sites.** There is only one licensed camping site in the Borough and this was maintained throughout the year in a satisfactory manner.

## **Sanitary Inspection.**

### **Summary of Visits.**

Housing Inspections	207
Slaughter House Visits	43
Visits to other Premises	110

## **IV. HOUSING.**

Further progress was made in this field and a new Housing Estate was opened at Rock Lane which will accommodate some 75 houses. The policy of the Council in building a greater proportion of two bedroomed houses and bungalows have enabled them to find homes for many young married people who would otherwise have had to wait much longer for a home of their own.

Seven properties were dealt with under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936, demolitions or undertakings not to re-let being secured.

## V. FOOD AND DRUGS.

**Ice Cream.** One new application for registration as a Retailer of ice cream was approved, but 2 registrations lapsed as a result of business changes. All premises were inspected and conditions were found to be uniformly satisfactory. No samples were taken for analysis by the Council's staff.

**Milk and Dairies.** The 4 registered distributors premises were inspected and as reported previously were of a low standard, due primarily to the old state and bad arrangement of buildings. Some improvement has however followed the inspections.

**Slaughter of Animals.** There was a further marked decrease in the use made of the Bodmin Slaughter house at which no structural alteration was carried out during the year.

TABLE VI.

Carcasses Inspected and Condemned.

	Bullocks & Cows	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
Number killed	184	5	910	46
Number inspected	156	5	726	46
Whole carcasses condemned except for Tuberculosis	3	1	13	1
Part carcasses condemned except for Tuberculosis	26	—	24	—
Percentage inspected affected with disease or injury other than Tuberculosis	20	20	5	2
Whole carcasses condemned for Tuberculosis	2	—	—	1
Part carcasses condemned for Tuberculosis	2	—	—	—
Percentage inspected affected by Tuberculosis	3	—	—	2

**Other Foods.** Voluntary surrender of other foods for condemnation were even more than the previous year's record, and food retailers were consistently co-operative with regard to any suggested improvements to their premises in the interest of hygiene.

## VI. Prevalence & Control of Infectious Diseases.

### NOTIFIED INFECTIOUS DISEASES, 1951.

Scarlet Fever	.....	21
Dysentery	.....	12
Measles	.....	121
Food Poisoning	.....	2
Diphtheria	.....	1
		<hr/>
		157
		<hr/>

Measles was the most prevalent disease during the year, the majority of cases occurring between June and August. Scarlet Fever was more commonly noted than in 1950 and cases were distributed throughout the year. It is probable that many mild cases which occurred early in the year missed observation and many cases of sore throat only, occurred at the same time. The preventive measures advocated for scarlet fever seem pointless when directed at only one manifestation of infection by streptococcus hæmolyticus when others pass without comment. There is a great need for education in relation to infectious diseases in general, and the awakening of public conscience as to limiting the spread of these diseases. The reduced mortality from infectious diseases appears to be accompanied by increasing carelessness in regard to isolation and quarantine. The one exception to this generalisation is poliomyelitis, where even a rumour of its presence creates undue alarm in the public mind.



The single case of notified diphtheria occurred in St. Lawrence's Hospital.

During the year the town was selected with others by the Medical Research Council as one suitable for investigation in poliomyelitis. The work was conducted by the Sanitary Department. It consisted of laying swabs at selected points on the sewerage system for a period of 48 hours and submitting these for examination for the poliomyelitis virus. The separate points were investigated on two separate occasions. No poliomyelitis occurred during the year, and all swabs were negative for the virus.

**Tuberculosis** Five cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were notified during the year, three occurring in patients of St Lawrence's Hospital. B.C.G. Vaccination was commenced in 1951, being offered to tuberculin negative contacts of cases of pulmonary tuberculosis. Of 15 households involved all contacts below 40 years of age were tuberculin positive in 9. Four households had not been investigated, one being due to refusal. In one household, 5 tuberculin negative contacts were present, but B.C.G. was refused. B.C.G. vaccine was given to one contact only. The general response to testing was good, particularly in view of the rather complicated process involved. The whole of the contact work is now completed with the exception of refusals.

One death occurred in the civilian population from pulmonary tuberculosis. No Statutory Action was taken regarding any persons suffering from tuberculosis. The state of the register at the end of the year was as follows :—



TABLE VII.

	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Total.
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Notified cases at 31-12-50	13	13	4	4	34
New Cases notified 1951	3	2	1	1	7
Transfers to Borough, 1951	3	—	—	1	4
Total Entries	6	2	1	2	11
Deaths	1	1	—	—	2
Transfers out of and removed from Register	1	2	—	1	4
Total removed	2	3	—	1	6
Total remaining at 31-12-51	17	12	5	5	39







